

Signs & Symptoms of High Blood Pressure

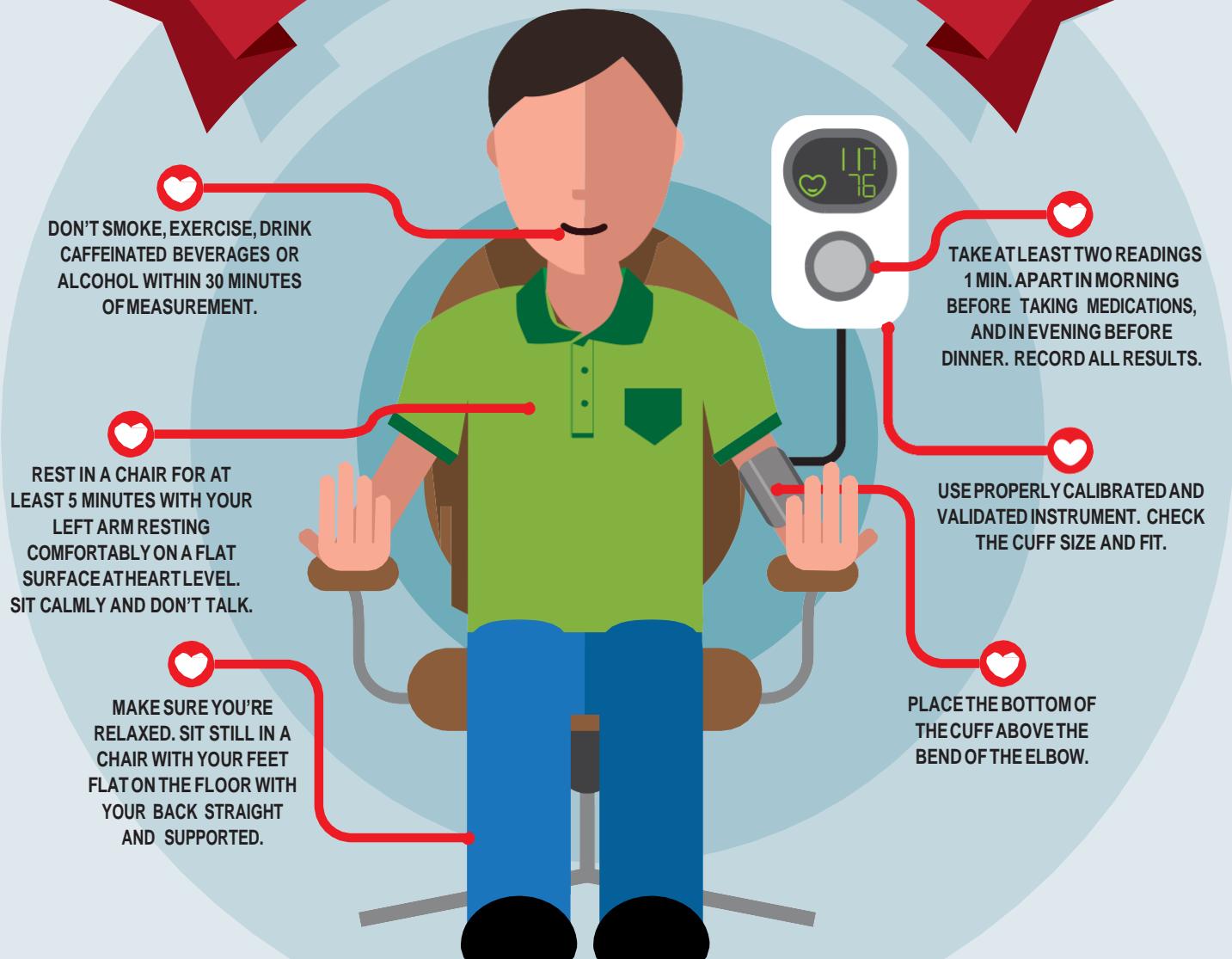


Illustrated above are the common signs or symptoms of high blood pressure also known as "hypertension". However, in most cases, patients will experience NO signs or symptoms, leading to high blood pressure being dubbed the "silent killer." Therefore, knowing your numbers, by monitoring your blood pressure regularly and taking your medications consistently is essential in determining if your treatment is working, or if your condition is getting worse.



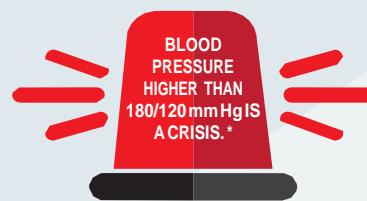
American
Heart
Association

BLOOD PRESSURE MEASUREMENT INSTRUCTIONS



American Heart Association recommended blood pressure levels

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg	and	DIASTOLIC mm Hg
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120-129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130-139	or	80-89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

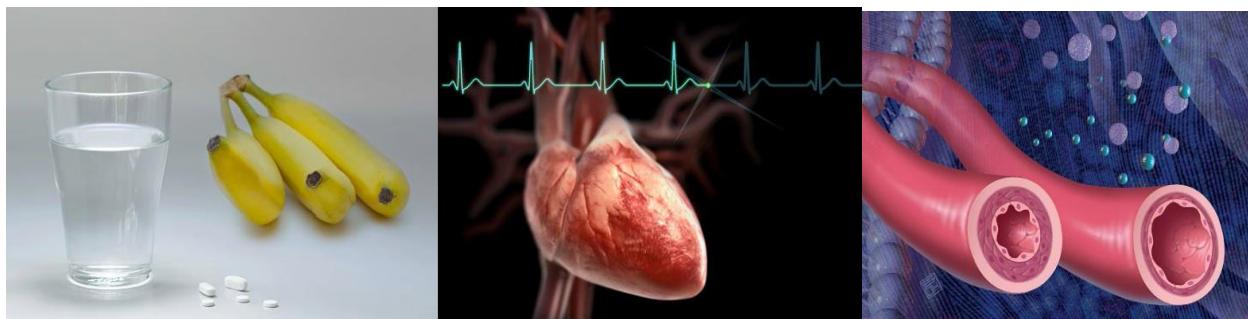


* Wait a few minutes and take blood pressure again.

If it's still high, contact your doctor immediately.

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Medications for Treating Hypertension



Diuretics Get Rid of Extra Water

Also called water pills, they're often the first choice if diet and exercise changes aren't enough. They help your body shed excess sodium and water to lower blood pressure. That means you'll pee more often. Some diuretics may lower the amount of potassium in your body. You might notice more muscle weakness, leg cramps, and fatigue. Others can boost blood sugar in people with diabetes. Erectile dysfunction is a less common side effect.

Beta-Blockers Slow Things Down

These drugs slow your heart rate, which means your ticker doesn't have to work as hard. They're also used to treat other heart conditions, like an abnormal heart rate, or arrhythmia. Your doctor may prescribe them along with other medications. Side effects can include insomnia, dizziness, fatigue, cold hands and feet, and erectile dysfunction.

ACE Inhibitors Open Things Up

These meds lower your body's supply of angiotensin II -- a substance that makes blood vessels contract and narrow. The result is more relaxed, open (dilated) arteries, as well as lower blood pressure and less effort for your heart. Side effects can include a dry cough, skin rash, dizziness, and high potassium levels. Don't get pregnant while taking one of these drugs.



ARBs Keep the Flow Going

Instead of lowering your supply of angiotensin II, these drugs block receptors for angiotensin. It's like placing a shield over a lock. This blockade prevents the chemical's artery-tightening effects and lowers your blood pressure. ARBs can take several weeks to become fully effective. Possible side effects include dizziness, muscle cramps, insomnia, and high potassium levels. Don't get pregnant while taking this medication.

Calcium Channel Blockers Slow the Beat

Calcium causes stronger heart contractions. These medications slow its movement into the cells of your heart and blood vessels. That eases your heartbeat and relaxes your blood vessels. These meds can cause dizziness, heart palpitations, swollen ankles, and constipation. Take them with food or milk. Avoid grapefruit juice and alcohol because of possible interactions.

Other Medications Can Help

Vasodilators, alpha blockers, and central agonists also relax blood vessels. Side effects can include dizziness, a fast heartbeat or heart palpitations, headaches, or diarrhea. Your doctor may suggest them if other blood pressure medications don't work well enough or if you have another condition.

Complementary Therapies as an Option

Meditation can lower blood pressure by putting your body into a state of deep rest. Yoga, tai chi, and deep breathing also help. Pair these relaxation techniques with other lifestyle changes, like diet and exercise. Be aware that herbal therapies may conflict with other drugs you take. Some herbs raise blood pressure. Tell your doctor if you take herbal or other dietary supplements.

What is High Blood Pressure Medicine?

Your health care provider has prescribed medicine to help lower your blood pressure. You also need to make the other lifestyle changes that will help reduce blood pressure, including: not smoking, reaching and maintaining a healthy weight, lowering sodium (salt) intake, eating a heart-healthy diet including potassium-rich foods, being more regularly physically active, and limiting alcohol to no more than one drink a day (for women) or two drinks a day (for men). Following your overall therapy plan will help you get on the road to a healthier life.

What should I know about taking medicine?

- Your health care provider may prescribe one or more drugs to bring your blood pressure down to normal.
- The medicines work in different ways to help lower blood pressure.
- Medicine only works when you take it regularly.
- Don't ever stop taking medicine on your own.
- Even after your blood pressure is lowered, you may still need to take medicine — perhaps for your lifetime — to keep your blood pressure normal.

How can I remember to take it?

Sometimes it's hard to keep track of your medicine. But to be safe, you must take it properly. Here are some good ways:

- Take your medicine at the same time each day.
- Take medicine along with daily events, like brushing your teeth.
 - Use a weekly pill box with separate sections for each day or time of day.
 - Ask family and friends to help remind you.
 - Use a medicine calendar.
 - Set a reminder on your smartphone.

What are the side effects?

For many people, high blood pressure medicine can effectively lower blood pressure, but some types may cause side effects. Tell your health care provider if you have side effects. But don't stop taking your medicine on your own to avoid them. Your health care provider can work with you to find the medication or dose that works best for you.

Here are some of the common side effects that may occur:

- Weakness, tiredness or drowsiness • Cough • Muscle cramps • Feeling thirsty
- Headache, dizziness or light-headedness • Constipation or diarrhea• Erectile dysfunction
- Trouble sleeping • Slow or fast heartbeat • Skin rash



Medicine Chart

Name: _____ Date: _____

NAME OF MEDICINE	COLOR	WHAT'S IT FOR?	DOSE	HOW OFTEN AND WHAT TIME	PRESCRIBING DOCTOR	PHARMACY PHONE NUMBER	SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS	REFILL DATE
Example: <i>Lisinopril (ace inhibitor)</i>	pink	heart failure	1 pill (5 mg)	once a day	Dr. Jones	650-555-1234	take before or after meal	9/1/16

Allergies to Medicines: _____

Tips to Lower Your Blood Pressure



Get a Better Handle on Stress

When you're stressed, your body makes hormones that cause your blood pressure to spike. Take note of when you feel tense and then look for ways to calm down. Find ways to cope with stress, like meditation, yoga, or deep breathing. Take time to relax and do things you enjoy, whether it's listening to music, gardening, or spending time with friends. Don't be afraid to get professional help when needed.

Maintain a Healthy Weight

As your weight rises, your blood pressure does, too. This is especially true if you carry extra pounds around your waist. To drop weight, try to eat fewer calories than you use during your day. But go slow. Losing no more than 2 pounds each week is a healthy goal and sets you up for success.

Move More

Exercise is one of the best things you can do to lower your blood pressure. Aim for 30 minutes of activity most days (150 minutes a week). Not a fan of the gym? Gardening, walking your dog, and playing with your kids at the park counts, too. Try to add some muscle strengthen in 2 days a week if you're able. If you have heart issues, check with your doctor first about the best types of activity for you

Get Better Sleep

Most people need **7 to 8 hours** of shut eye each night. Get less than that and your blood pressure can become harder to manage. That's because sleep helps control your stress hormones and keeps your nervous system running smoothly. If you have **insomnia**, talk to your doctor about what's keeping you awake at night. You may also want to get checked for **sleep apnea**, a disorder that makes you briefly stop breathing and can also affect your blood pressure.

Watch What You Eat



Give the **DASH** a try. The long version of its name: dietary approaches to stop hypertension. It's an eating plan that can help you manage your blood pressure. **You avoid foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol and focus on those that are rich in protein and fiber:** like whole grains, lean poultry, fish, and low-fat dairy. Start today by adding a veggie or fruit at each meal or cutting back on sweets and salty snacks.

Too much sodium in your diet can push your blood pressure up. Aim for no more than 2,000 milligrams each day. To stay in that range, eat fewer canned and packaged foods. Read the labels and choose brands with the least amount of sodium. Instead of reaching for the saltshaker at the table, use freshly ground pepper or a squeeze of lemon.

High amounts of sugar can raise your blood pressure as well as inflammation in your body. You won't be surprised to find sweeteners in soda, cereal, and cookies. But they also hide in many processed foods that don't taste sweet, like salad dressing and soup. Keep track of how much sugar you have each day and try to limit yourself to no more than 36 grams -- about the amount in a can of soda.

If you're sensitive to caffeine, as little as 200 milligrams can raise your blood pressure. That's the amount in two cups of coffee. And caffeine shows up in other foods too, like soda and energy drinks. Check your blood pressure about half an hour after you have a drink with caffeine. If your reading goes up by 5 points or more, you may need to cut back.

Get more Potassium. Your blood pressure is likely to be higher if you don't get enough of this nutrient. Shoot for between 3,000 and 3,500 milligrams each day. How much is that? A medium banana has about 420 milligrams. A baked potato with the skin gives you more than 900 milligrams. Spinach, beans, tomatoes, oranges, yogurt, and sweet potatoes are also high in potassium. Some people with medical issues like kidney disease or who take certain medicines may have to be careful with potassium. So check with your doctor before changing what you eat.



Having a good support system can help

Big changes are easier when you have loved ones rooting for you. Tell family and friends about your plans to lower your blood pressure. Let them know how they can help, whether it's not smoking around you, cooking healthier meals, or meeting you at the gym to work out together.

Keeping Tabs on Your Blood Pressure & take your prescribed medications as directed

Check your BP regularly to make sure it's within the normal range. High blood pressure often doesn't have symptoms. So, measuring your BP is the best way to tell if your Medications, diet, exercise, and other lifestyle changes are working.

Controlling other health conditions

Work with your doctor to make sure any other health issues you have are under control. Many people with **diabetes** also have **high blood pressure**. Other conditions like **high cholesterol, sleep apnea, kidney disease and thyroid disorders** are also often linked with it. When you manage your overall health, you'll help keep your blood pressure in check.

Be aware of other potential pitfalls



Some over-the-counter drugs and supplements can raise your blood pressure. Among them are cold medicines, pain relievers, and herbal supplements like arnica, ginseng, and St. John's wort. Make sure your doctor knows the products you use, especially if you take a prescription medication to manage your blood pressure. Check in with them or your pharmacist before you try anything new.

Limit your Alcohol intake. Besides raising your blood pressure, drinking alcohol too much can make you more likely to have problems with your heart, liver, and brain. Women should try to have no more than one drink a day. For men, it's two. One drink equals 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor.

If You Smoke, Quit! Nicotine narrows your blood vessels and makes your heart beat faster, which raises your blood pressure. If you stop smoking, you may find that your blood pressure returns to a normal range. Talk to your doctor about the many ways to quit smoking for good.

Dietary
Approaches to
Stop
Hypertension

DASH Eating Plan

Food Group	Servings	Serving Size	Examples
 Vegetables	4-5 per Day	1 cup raw leafy greens 1/2 cup chopped raw or cooked vegetables 1/2 cup vegetable juice	Lettuce, kale, spinach, broccoli, carrots, green beans, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, asparagus, green peppers, low sodium tomato juice
 Fruits	4 per Day	1 medium fruit 1/2 cup cut fresh, frozen or canned fruit 1/4 cup dried fruit 1/2 cup 100% fruit juice	Apples, bananas, berries, oranges, pineapple, peaches, pears, grapes, melons, raisins, dried apricots <i>Limit juice to one serving a day</i>
 Grains	6-7 per Day	1 slice of bread 1/2 - 1 cup dry cereal 1/2 cup cooked rice, pasta or grain	Whole wheat bread and rolls, whole wheat pasta, English muffin, brown rice, pita bread, popcorn, oatmeal, quinoa, unsalted pretzels
 1% Fat or Non-Fat Milk and Dairy Products	2-3 per Day	1 cup milk or yogurt 1 1/2 ounce cheese	1% fat or non-fat milk, reduced fat cheese, fat free or low fat regular or frozen yogurt
 Poultry, Fish, Lean Meats	4-6 ounces per Day	1 ounce cooked meat, poultry or fish 1 egg = 1 ounce serving	Choose lean meat and trim visible fat, remove skin from poultry. Bake, broil or poach
 Beans, Nuts, Seeds	4 per Week	1/3 cup or 1 1/2 ounce nuts 2 tablespoons peanut butter 2 tablespoons or 1/2 ounce seeds 1/2 cup cooked beans or dry peas	Almonds, walnuts, sunflower seeds, peanuts, peanut butter, kidney beans, pinto beans, lentils, split peas
 Oils, Fats	2 per Day	1 teaspoon soft margarine 1 teaspoon vegetable oil	Soft margarine, vegetable oils canola, corn, olive or safflower, low fat mayonnaise, light salad dressing
 Desserts, Sweets, Added Sugars	4 or less per Week	1 tablespoon jelly 1/2 cup sorbet 1 small cookie	Jams and jellies, fruit punch, hard candy, maple syrup, sorbet and ices, sugar



Hypertension Education Toolkit

Self-Management Goal



***Exercise * Healthy Eating * Take all medication as directed and use properly
* Reduce Stress *Monitor Blood Pressure***

My goal is to work on: <i>Example: Diet</i>	
I will do this by (what action): <i>Example: Monitoring my Sodium intake</i>	
I will do this for (how much): <i>Example: Under 2 Grams a day</i>	
I will do this (when): <i>Example: before eating</i>	
I will do this on (how often): <i>Example: daily</i>	
Barriers to my goal: <i>Example: eating out</i>	

Listed below are things you can do to help yourself maintain your best health while managing your Blood Pressure and are good ideas to pick goals from!

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Take your blood pressure and ALL medications as prescribed.Follow up with your physician as directedMonitor Blood Pressure as recommended by your physicianMaintain a healthy weightLearn signs and symptoms of Hypertension (high blood pressure)Learn Signs and symptoms of Hypotension (low Blood pressure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Eat a well-balanced DASH / low sodium diet.Smoking cessation Exercise each dayGet at least 7 hours of sleep each nightMaintain good control of your other medical conditionsStay current with flu/Pneumonia vaccinesHave Cholesterol checked as recommended by your physicianReduce stress, get support as needed.
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My Blood Pressure Log

Name: _____

My Blood Pressure Goal: _____ mm Hg

Instructions:

- Measure your blood pressure twice a day—morning and late afternoon—at about the same times every day.
 - For best results, sit comfortably with both feet on the floor for at least two minutes before taking a measurement.
 - When you measure your blood pressure, rest your arm on a table so the blood pressure cuff is at the same height as your heart.
 - Record your blood pressure on this sheet and show it to your doctor at every visit.